Thomas A. Edison Papers Digital Edition

Edison-Miller Family Records

Family Records Series, Part IV

[FD005-F] Edison, William L. (1899-1905)

Family Records Series -- Correspondence

Title
[FD005-F] Edison, William L. (1899-1905)

Description
This folder contains letters from William Leslie Edison (1878-1937) to his stepmother, Mina Miller Edison, and his father, Thomas A. Edison. Five letters, covering the years 1899-1905, have been selected. The earliest letter, dating from May 1899, discusses William's efforts to establish a phonograph retail business in New York City and his "hope to show father that I have outgrown all my previous foolishness." In a letter from February 1900, William attempts to reconcile with his father after his marriage to Blanche Travers. A letter from May 1901 discusses a kidnaping threat made against Madeleine Edison and William's desire to enter his father's recently established battery business. Also included is a 1905 note from William reacting to a statement by Thomas Edison Jr. regarding his wish to continue the "work which my father perhaps will not live to finish."

Additional letters written by William L. Edison during the period 1899-1910 can be found in the Charles Edison Fund Collection. Some of the letters in the CEF Collection, scanned from the microfilm, are now in the possession of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

URL

https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/folder/FD005-F

Identifier

FD005-F

Type

Family Records

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Is Part Of

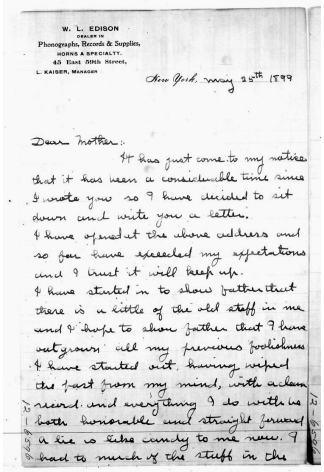
Family Records Series -- Correspondence

Alternative Title

Edison, William L. (1899-1905)

Has Version

Archive.org Viewer, Microfilm Series Reel 221


W. L. EDISON
DEALER IN
Phonographs, Records & Supplies,
HORNS A SPECIALTY.
45 East 20th Street,
L. KAISER, Manager

New York, may 25th 1899

Dear Mother:-
It has just come to my notice that it has been a considerable time since I wrote you so I have decided to sit down and write you a letter.
I have opened the above address and so far have exceeded my expectations and I trust it will keep up.
I have started in to show Father that there is a little of the old stuff in me and I hope to show Father that I have outgrown all my previous foolishness I have started out turning wiped the dust from my mind, with a clean record and everything I do with me both honorable and straight forward a lie is like unto me now. I had to much of the stuff in the

Attribution

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[FD005AAA], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, May 25th, 1899

Title
[FD005AAA], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, May 25th, 1899

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Edison, Thomas Alva, Jr
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1899-05-25

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- TAE name
- Management (companies and organizations)
- Phonograph equipment and accessories

Folder ID
FD005-F

Microfilm ID
221:749

Document ID
FD005AAA

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/FD005AAA

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Publisher
Thomas A. Edison Papers, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

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Timestamp
25 May 1899

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https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/iiif/2/FD005AAA/manifest

W. L. EDISON
DEALER IN
Phonographs, Records & Supplies,
HORNS A SPECIALTY.
45 East 59th Street,
L. KAISER, MANAGER

New York, May 25th 1899

Dear Mother:

It has just come to my notice that it has been a considerable time since I wrote you so I have decided to sit down and write you a letter.
I have opened at the above address and so far have exceeded my expectations and I trust it will keep up.
I have started in to show Father that there is a little of the old staff in me and I hope to show Father that I have outgrown all my previous foolishness I have started out, having wiped the past from my mind, with a clean record and everything I do with be both honorable and straight forward a lie is like candy to me now. I had to much of the stuff in the

5th 1899

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W. L. EDISON
DEALER IN
Phonographs, Records & Supplies,
HORNS A SPECIALTY.
45 East 59th Street,
L. KAISER, MANAGER

New York, ...

2

past and dont want any more.
I have made more friends and had more friends come to see me, than my brother would in a life time in the short time thats I have been open.
Tom has gone to the dogs. he is out in Pittsburg having gone there to escape the sheriff and the law. He owes thousands of dollars and I know for certain that over a thousand was obtained by worthless checks. a hotel bill of $500.00 and another for $135.00 and many other such bills. also saloon bills. They all come to me because I am his brother but I just tell them to take a trolley ride as I am

12-6-96

W. L. EDISON
DEALER IN
Phonographs, Records & Supplies,
HORNS A SPECIALTY.
45 East 59th Street,
L. KAISER, MANAGER

New York, ...

not responsible for his doings.
He is the laughing stock of business
men. Well enough of that.
I had a splendid offer the other day
several business men of very good
standing offered me five thousand
dollars cash, down and three thou.
a year to be president of a company
recently incorporated in N.Y. but I
told them I would consider the
proposition and did not care to
sell my name and that they
would have to see my father
before I could do anything with
them. They are going over to
see him soon and if he
objects, all right, nothing gained
nothing lost.

W. L. EDISON
DEALER IN
Phonographs, Records & Supplies,
HORNS A SPECIALTY.
45 East 59th Street,
L. KAISER, MANAGER

New York, ...

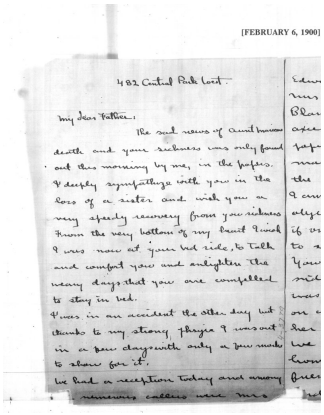
4.

Don't forget about the picture and give my love to the babies with love to all

yours devotedly

Will.

12-65-96



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[FD005AAB], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, February 6th, 1900

Title
[FD005AAB], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, February 6th, 1900

Editor's Notes
Supplied year

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned

- Edison, Marion Wallace
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)

Date
1900-02-06

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- TAE health
- TAE personality and character
- Deaths and funerals
- Social customs, norms, values
- Health and safety

Folder ID
FD005-F

Microfilm ID
221:751

Document ID
FD005AAB

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/FD005AAB

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Timestamp
6 February 1900

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482 Central Park West.

My dear Father:

The sad news of Aunt Marion's death and your sickness was only found out this morning by me, in the papers. I deeply sympathize with you in the loss of a sister and wish you a very speedy recovery from your sickness From the very bottom of my heart I wish I was now at your bed side, to talk and comfort you and enlighten the weary days that you are compelled to stay in bed.

I was in an accident the other day but thanks to my strong physique I was out in a few days with only a few marks to show for it.

We had a reception today and among numerous callers were Mrs

[FEBRUARY 6, 1900]

2

Edwin Gould and her mother
nus shady.
Blanche has gained quite an
access to society through her
popularity and ever since our
marriage been continually on
the go.
I am sure father, that your
objections would be removed
if once you would condesend
to see her and have a Talk
You have heard the untrue
side from a woman who
was compelled to leave Balto.
on account of a scandal about
her female child.
We have a very pretty
home with lots of good
friends with only your love
and guidance lacking

4-3779

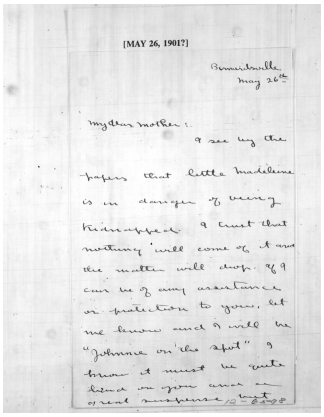
4-3779

when you get back to Orange, will you not make arangment to have us over to the house?
Just for an evening that is all I ask and if I cant change your mind towards me I will be very much disappointed.
I may have been a disobedient son but hardly a bad and worthless one.
Come! let me see if I cant make it cheerful in the old home as I did some months ago.
Hoping that mother and all are well I close asking you to let me hear from you in some way or other.

your devoted son
William

Feb. 6th

4-3779



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[FD005AAC], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, May 26th, 1901

Title
[FD005AAC], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, May 26th, 1901

Editor's Notes
Supplied year

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Edison Storage Battery Co
- Edison, Madeleine
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1901-05-26

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Newspapers, books, other publications
- Labor
- Crime and justice
- Electric battery

Folder ID
FD005-F

Microfilm ID
221:753

Document ID
FD005AAC

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/FD005AAC

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Timestamp
26 May 1901

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https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/iiif/2/FD005AAC/manifest

[MAY 26, 1901?]

Bernardsville
May 26th

My dear mother:-

I see by the papers that little Madeleine is in danger of being kidnapped. I trust that nothing will come of it and the matter will drop. If I can be of any assistance or protection to you, let me know and I will be "Johnnie on the spot" I know it must be quite hard on you and a great suspense but

12-6-98

probably it will turn
out to be a ranch or
boat who wrote the letters
we are enjoying ourselves
on our farm with all
the chickens and so forth
I am going to send you
down some spring chickens
in a few weeks and
I am sure you will
like them as they are
very tender and sweet.
If you want any open
stubb let me know and
I will send your wants
I am going to ask father
for a position in his

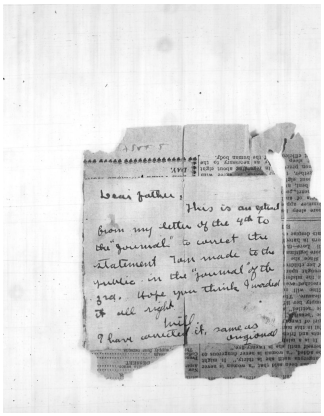
new bottling works and
something to do this fall.
I hope to get
I leave soon

new battery concern and I hope to get something to do this fall. I have been trying for several position but the answer invariably has been "why dont you get your brother to get it for you" so I am still at it.
I trust that the new battery will be a big success and father will reap more benefit from them than the other things he has done.

I neglected to thank you
for the overcoat so allow
me to do so now.

Trusting that all are well
and that you will
enjoy good health
during this Lenten
ordeal. I remain
as ever

your loving son
William



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[FD005AAD], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, January 1905

Title
[FD005AAD], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, January 1905

Editor's Notes
Supplied year and month

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned
Edison, Thomas Alva, Jr

Date
1905-01-00

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Newspapers, books, other publications

Folder ID
FD005-F

Microfilm ID
221:756

Document ID
FD005AAD

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/FD005AAD

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Timestamp
1 January 1905

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Dear father:

This is an extract from my letter of the 4th to the "journal" to correct the statement I am made to the public in the "journal" of the 3rd. Hope you think I worded it all right.

Will

I have corrected it, same as original

First, Best a
INCORPORA
No.....
For.....
From the
NATIONAL PRESS
25
WEST BROADWAY
NEW YORK CITY
P.O. Box
1847
INTELLIGENCE Co
From Colo. Spgs, Colo. Gazette
JAN 4, 1905

A Thankless Child.

"How sharper than a serpent's [illegible]
It is to have a thankless child!"

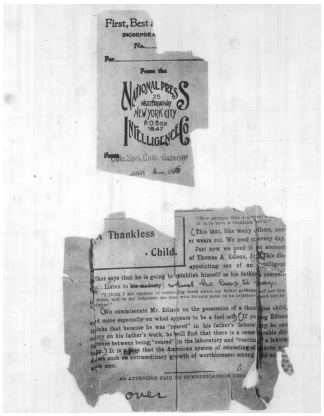
This text, like many others, never wears out. We need it every day. Just now we need it on account of Thomas A. Edison, Jr. This disappointing son of an intelligent father says that he is going to establish himself as his father's competitor. Listen to ~~his modesty~~ what he has to say.

"I think I am capable of continuing work which my father perhaps will not live to finish, and in my judgment the man who invents must be an originator and not an imitator."

We commiserate Mr. Edison on the possession of a thankless child, and more especially on what appears to be a fool son. If young Edison thinks that because he was "reared" in his father's laboratory he can carry on his father's work, he will find that there is a considerable difference between being "reared" in the laboratory and "rearing" a laboratory. It is a pity that the American system of educating children produces such an extraordinary growth of worthlessness among the sole men.

NO ATTENTION PAID TO COMMUNICATIONS UNSIGNED.

over



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[FD005AAE], Interview, Thomas Alva Edison, Jr., January 3rd, 1905

Title
[FD005AAE], Interview, Thomas Alva Edison, Jr., January 3rd, 1905

Bibliographic Citation

Edison, Thomas Alva, Jr. "A Thankless Child." 3 Jan. 1905.

Author
Edison, Thomas Alva, Jr

Mentioned
Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1905-01-03

Type
Interview

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Inventions and creativity

Folder ID
FD005-F

Microfilm ID
221:757

Document ID
FD005AAE

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/FD005AAE

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Timestamp
3 January 1905

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First, Best a
INCORPORA
No.....
For.....
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NEW YORK CITY
P.O. Box
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JAN 4, 1905

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NO ATTENTION PAID TO COMMUNICATIONS UNSIGNED.

over